

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-35. **(Canceled)**.

36. **(Currently Amended)** Apparatus for facilitating sealing of a puncture formed in a proximal lateral surface of a vessel, the apparatus comprising:

an elongate bar having proximal and distal ends, a longitudinal axis extending through the proximal and distal ends, and a central region disposed between the proximal and distal ends, the bar being a solid piece of uniform material except for having a first bore extending laterally through the central region bar and generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis;

a filament having a first free end and a second free end, the filament being slidably disposed through and slidably removable from the first bore by retracting either the first free end or by retracting the second free end, the bar being slidable relative to the filament; and

a delivery sheath having proximal and distal ends, a lumen extending therebetween to contain the bar and filament, and a sharpened tip at the distal end.

37. **(Canceled)**.

38. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 36, further comprising a push rod disposed in the lumen proximal of the bar.

39. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the bar has a shape chosen from the group consisting of cylindrical shapes, rectangular shapes, and oval shapes.

40. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the bar comprises a biodegradable material.

41. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 36, further comprising a tensioning device configured to hold the filament in a tensioned state such that the tensioning device provides an external compressive force upon the proximal lateral surface of the vessel during tensioning of the filament.

42. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 41, wherein the tensioning device comprises:

- an upright having upper and lower ends;
- a plurality of legs attached to the lower end; and
- a grip affixed to the upper end.

43. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 42, wherein the grip comprises a V-shaped groove formed in an elastomeric material.

44. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the first bore is disposed in a central region of the bar.

45. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 36, further comprising an eyelet coupled to the bar, wherein the filament is slidably disposed through the first bore and then the eyelet and then back through the first bore.

46. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the first bore is disposed in [[a]] the central region of the bar, and the eyelet is coupled to a distal region of the bar.

47. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the eyelet is coupled to [[a]] the central region of the bar, and the first bore is ~~coupled to disposed in~~ a distal region of the bar.

48. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 36, further comprising a second bore extending laterally through the bar, wherein the filament is slidably disposed through both the first bore and the second bore.

49. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus of claim 48, wherein the first bore is disposed in [[a]] the central region of the bar, and the second bore is disposed in a distal region of the bar.

50-72. **(Cancelled).**

73. **(Currently Amended)** Apparatus for facilitating sealing of a puncture formed in a proximal lateral surface of a vessel, the apparatus comprising:

an elongate bar having proximal and distal ends and a central region disposed between the proximal and distal ends, the bar being a solid piece of uniform material except for a first bore extending laterally through the central region, and an eyelet spaced apart from the first bore and extending from the proximal end, the first bore and the eyelet each having generally parallel longitudinal axes, the bar having a distal end having a generally planar surface oriented parallel to the bore;

a filament having a first free end and a second free end, the filament being slidably disposed through and slidably removable from the first bore and the eyelet, the filament configured to be retracted from the first bore and the eyelet by retracting either the first free end or by retracting the second free end, the bar being slidable relative to the filament; and

a delivery sheath having proximal and distal ends, a lumen extending therebetween to contain the bar and filament, and a sharpened tip at the distal end and disposed upon a peripheral longitudinal side of the delivery sheath.

74. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 73, wherein the bar is a cylindrical bar.

75. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 73, wherein the bar has a generally rectangular cross section.

76. **(Currently Amended)** Apparatus for facilitating sealing of a puncture formed in a proximal lateral surface of a vessel, the apparatus comprising:

an elongate bar having a proximal end, a distal end, a longitudinal axis extending through the proximal and distal ends, and a central region disposed between the proximal and distal ends, the bar being a solid piece of uniform material except for a first bore extending laterally through a central region of the bar disposed between the proximal end and the distal end and an eyelet spaced apart from the first bore and extending from the proximal end, the first bore and the eyelet each having generally parallel longitudinal axes;

a filament having a first free end and a second free end, the filament being slidably disposed through and slidably removable from the first bore and the eyelet of the bar, the filament configured to be retracted by retracting either the first free end or by retracting the second free end; and

a delivery sheath having proximal and distal ends, a lumen extending therebetween to contain the bar and filament, and a sharpened tip disposed at the distal end and upon a peripheral longitudinal side of the delivery sheath.

77. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 76, wherein the bar is resorbable.

78. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 76, wherein the sheath includes a handle disposed at the proximal end.